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NSC BRIEFING

30 September 1959

CEYLON

- I. New Prime Minister W. Dahanayake, although strongly supported by ^{his} own local constituents, is not widely respected among top political leaders. He is a fifty-seven year old bachelor, ^{who} has never left Ceylon.
- II. Dahanayake has publicly stated intention to continue Bandaranaike's neutralist-socialist policies and to maintain the Sri Lanka (Ceylon) Freedom party in power until next regularly scheduled elections in April 1961.
- III. Dahanayake may have difficulty remaining long in power.
 - A. Governor General did not consult other parties concerning Dahanayake's appointment, and thus does not know whether new coalition under Dahanayake possible.
 - B. Such coalition is necessary, as ruling Freedom party has only about 38 members in 100-man parliament, and relies on support of six appointed members and some independents for working majority.
 - C. Bandaranaike's policies had been under continuous attack during past year.
 - D. Diverse right- and left-wing elements in ruling party may feel they can do better under some realignment now that Bandaranaike's leadership gone; scramble for leadership within party likely.

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- E. Opposition leaders assessing situation; possibly will introduce no-confidence motion in near future.
- IV. Situation should be clarified soon, since parliament is now in session and ruling group cannot continue for long without producing majority vote necessary for government to conduct any business.
- V. Ceylonese public has reacted calmly thus far, although there have been minor demonstrations against Buddhist monks; Bandaranaike's assassin was Buddhist monk.
 - A. Governor General has alerted all active and reserve military personnel throughout the island, strict surveillance being maintained by Colombo police, all cabinet ministers being carefully guarded.

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